ROY & RAE LIVESEY

Understanding BOOKS • New Age BULLETIN

BURY HOUSE
CLOWS TOP
KIDDERMINSTER
WORCS. DY14 9HX
England

29 January 1994

Dear Mrs Arrabito:

Thank you for your kind letter of (undated); it touched my heart to read your news and of your carrying on the work of your late husband in such a faithful way. Today I have mailed surface the books which you request. In the course of enquiries about Sister Charlotte, both at her church in Napa and at the headquarters of the denomination where Sister Charlotte had been employed as an evangelist, I was able to find absolutely no details of the time when the lady was a nun. I found to my surprise that there was no testimony anywhere from Sister Charlotte - name of the convent, place, names of colleagues, stories from that time etc. Rivera has planty of stories which are untrue. Sister Charlotte seems to have left nothing on the record that I can find. Of course I have much more on Rivera in my very large unpublished manuscript, and somewhat more on Sister Charlotte also, but no, I do not say that she was not a nun - not at all. But I do find it extraordinary that the good people who employed her, both at the local level in Napa and at the United Pentecostal Church H.Q., were unable to offer a shred of evidence that Sister Charlotte was ever a nun apart from her own statement that she was a nun. Pastor Price at the church in Napa was, to say the least evasive, when talking to me. I can tell you also that Ruth Brewer, the wife of my friend, ex Roman Catholic Priest and former SDA pastor Dr Bartholomew F. Brewer of San Diego met with

a similar evasiveness when talking to Mrs Price some years ago. Is Angwin near Napa? You ask me to send you what you describe as "your documentation" on Alberto. My manuscript runs to 250 pages and there are about 600 footnotes but I will look out some items for you and make copies. We don't have a copier here and so it will take a bit of time. I will see what I can choose for you. What about the foreword of my book which is written by Dr Samuel Vila of Barcelona Spain? You will find his books on the Spanish shelves of any good Christian bookstore in CA. The most popular Bible Dictionary in Spanish is by Dr Vila who is also a publisher. His work continues in Florida. The point is that whilst Rivera was supposed to be a prisoner in an insane asylum in Barcelona in 1967 (see Alberto part one, p 29 onwards), he was in fact the Director of a Protestant school in Barcelona where he had been hired by Dr Vila. Dr Vila dismissed Rivera after six months whereupon Rivera went to find accomodation and solace with Catholic priests in a poor part of the town. He robbed them as he had robbed Dr Vila. All of this is testified by Dr Vila and those involved on the RC side. Also in 1967, the year of great activity in the comic book, Rivera was cheating another school in Barcelona by offering his services to raise money for it in the United States. There is documentation from that school too. You will be familiar perhaps with the inside-front-cover of the latest editions of the Alberto comic books. There you find a picture of teachers in a staffroom seated at a table with Rivera. I have the identities, addresses and phone numbers of each of these, just as I have phone numbers for those asterisked in the Bulletin of November 1991. Rivera was not a teacher at that school. It was not the Parish School as described in the caption of the photograph, and the only school of which Rivera was the Director was the Protestant school headed by the best known evangelical Christian in all of Spain - Dr Samuel Vila. Rivera has deceived some of the best, and Dr Vila writes in the foreword of how Rivera deceived him. Dr Vila's son, David Vila is the Head of Libros CLIE (The Spanish Evangelical Literature Fellowship, Inc) P.O. Box 8337, Ft Lauderdale, FL 33310. I was there in June. If you telephone them on 1-800-327-7933 they will send you their catalogue of books in Spanish. There in the catalogue you will find books by author Don Jaime Carder (James Carder). Mr Carder is 86 years old. He baptised Rivera as a seventeen year old in a fine church in Las Palmas, Canary Islands. Rivera was then seventeen and had come from the Catholic Church where he was an altar boy. He has never been a Catholic since. I would be glad to send you documentation and I shall look out items for you, but it may be convincing, more convincing, to talk to Mr Carder (He is an old American missionary to the Canary Islands). Telephone: 011-34-2222-71-96. Or speak to David Vila on (305) 739-4654. You could call Dr Brewer who was ordained at the same time as Rivera on (619) 698-1823. Or speak to Bob Bush who was a Jesuit priest until 1988. He is featured in the video "Catholicism in Crisis." He spoke with Rivera when Rivera was in San Jose and found him to be a fraud. Bob is confined to bed as a cripple, and is on (408) 554-0215. That's San Jose the very city where Bob was a serving Jesuit priest. However nothing proves anything better than the full 250 pages of manuscript where 40 years of Rivera's life is accounted for, and only this can really show that Rivera could never have been a Jesuit priest whatever deception processes may be credited to this group of men.

I appreciated your writing. May the good Lord be pleased to lead us both into all truth.

Sincerely in Christ -

Drawing Aside the Purple Curtain
The Papal System Today: an Analysis of the News

THE ALBERTO RIVERA STORY

Fact and *Fantasy* Compared – Forty Years of Fraud

by Roy Livesey

Introduction *by Shaun Willcock*

Alberto Rivera is the principal character in the *"Alberto"* series of picture books, published by Chick Publications in California. They claim to be based upon the life story of a man who said he was an ex-Jesuit priest converted to Christ, and on other information about Roman Catholicism and the Jesuits which he supplied. When asked to make a statement concerning the validity of his supposed life story, Rivera published a declaration that what was written by "JTC" (Jack T. Chick) was "a true and actual account."

But this was a lie. And although this lie was exposed to some extent by others before him, Roy Livesey carried out the most extensive and thorough research of all into the life and claims of Alberto Rivera. His research revealed that Rivera was never a Jesuit priest, but a fraud and a deceiver.

Sadly, although Rivera died in 1997 his false message continues to be promoted across the world, via the Chick comic books as well as via the many who believed him and continue to do so. And those who seek to expose him are branded as "Jesuit agents" or Vatican stooges, the very tactic which Rivera used, and one which the gullible are only too willing to emulate.

As Livesey writes in the preface to his short biography entitled *Alberto Rivera: "Alberto" Comic Book Con Man* (2005): "Surely Rivera must have been the most consistently successful deceiver the Church has known. After some forty years of deceiving readers and international audiences, Rivera died in 1997 without ever having been stopped in his tracks.... Unfortunately there have been too many undiscerning Protestants and evangelicals ready to be persuaded by our con man and *agent provocateur*. Alberto Rivera could only exaggerate and hinder the truth; and truth is essential if God is to be honoured and the Protestant cause not hindered."

The following article is reprinted from Roy Livesey's *New Age Bulletin,* Vol III, No 4, November 1991. It is a concise summary of his research. His booklet entitled *Alberto Rivera: "Alberto" Comic Book Con Man,* was published by Bury House Christian Books, Kidderminster, England, in 2005. It was based on his complete biography of Rivera, a very comprehensive and as-yet unpublished

manuscript, entitled *Alberto Rivera: the True Story*. Perhaps this excellent expose could yet be published.

It must be borne in mind that Roy Livesey exposes Rivera's fantasies in the article below, but this is by no means to say that many of the things Rivera describes have not indeed occurred, or that they are not occurring still. Rivera said many true things about Rome, gleaned from various reliable sources, or he would not have been able to deceive so many for so long. But Livesey's purpose is to show that Rivera was never a Jesuit priest, and that he fabricated many things about Rome to sensationalise his "life story".

Also, it must be pointed out that some of those who have written exposés of Rivera in the past, and the publications in which these have appeared, are not doctrinally sound and we do not recommend them for doctrine in any way. But men may carry out good factual research regardless of their personal beliefs. Rivera branded all such researchers as Jesuit agents, and sadly many who continue to believe his message follow him in this tactic; but it does not automatically follow that every man who has exposed Rivera is an agent of Rome whose research is faulty! Evidence is evidence, and shooting the messenger just because his message is not to their liking does not make the evidence disappear.

The Alberto Rivera* Story

*** Jim Jones, Jim Bakker... Alberto Rivera.
*** Rivera pretends he was Jesuit Priest who learned Vatican secrets.
*** He teaches a false history supposedly learned in the Vatican.
*** His message reaches millions through best-selling picture books.
*** His financial frauds continue after nearly forty years.
*** He is known world-wide and living in Southern California.
*** The incredible story of money and religious fraud.
*** The *fact* of Rivera's life is as extraordinary as his *fantasy*.
*** An epic story as extraordinary as any film or fiction?

Fact and *Fantasy* Compared – Forty Years of Fraud

(a sample of two years' research worldwide)

The *fantasy* is of Rivera as a Jesuit Priest, destroying Protestant churches and seminaries, and eventually made privy to extraordinary Roman Catholic history and Vatican secrets no historians have ever uncovered. The *fact* is we discovered forty years of Rivera's fable, false testimony and fraud.

1942

The *fantasy* starts with Alberto, a seven year old in the Canary Islands (Spain), beginning his studies to be a priest. Millions of best-selling picture books have gone out from Chick Publications, Chino, California, telling his story. The *fact* is the story is untrue.

1949-51

Rivera's *fantasy* includes homosexual interference with him by priests in his Jesuit school, tales of tunnels connecting monasteries and convents, with places for disposing of the bodies of babies. Rivera tells of one visit from his Jesuit school to the Salesian monastery working with orphans. His friend fell in a ditch and the pictures from *"The Force"* relate more of the scurrilous story. Rivera has told some that he attended the Salesian school.* According to the picture book he attended the Jesuit school.* Neither school has any trace of him. Nor was there a Salesian monastery, only a school. The fact is, according to Rivera's elder sister*, he never attended any kind of religious school.

1952-55

Rivera was, according to his *fantasy*, destroying Protestant seminaries and churches in Spain. Our photograph shows the *fact* of a very youthful Rivera, Bible in hand, in the Canary Islands when a member of a Protestant church during this period. As to education, whilst most future Jesuit priests were getting an education, Rivera became a fare collector. Here we found his first frauds against the local bus company in Las Palmas.

A Jesuit infiltrator?

1955

Rivera went for further education to a seminary in Costa Rica. The *fact* is that he was sent by the Canary Island Protestant church. The photograph shows him about to leave by ship with another young church member, Plutarco Bonilla*. Rivera's *fantasy* is that he was serving the Jesuits and he helped destroy the seminary.

About to board ship to Venezuela, en route to Costa Rica, with Plutarco Bonilla

1955-57

One *fantasy* at the seminary is that two beautiful girls were assigned to him, as depicted in the comic book *"Alberto."* Alongside we show a portrait of Rivera in 1956. Another *fantasy* is that Rivera occasioned a hunger strike to serve Rome and bring the seminary into disrepute. The *fact* is, according to Plutarco Bonilla, Rivera was involved with none of this. In 1957 Rivera was expelled for lying and for breaking seminary rules.

Fact: 1956 – Rivera at the Seminary

1957

Another *fantasy* is that Rivera was ordained as a Catholic priest in Costa Rica. The *fact* is, after Rivera was expelled from the Protestant seminary*, he sought the sympathy of the Methodist Church and began work with them. A bad report from his Methodist superior* is in hand also.

1965

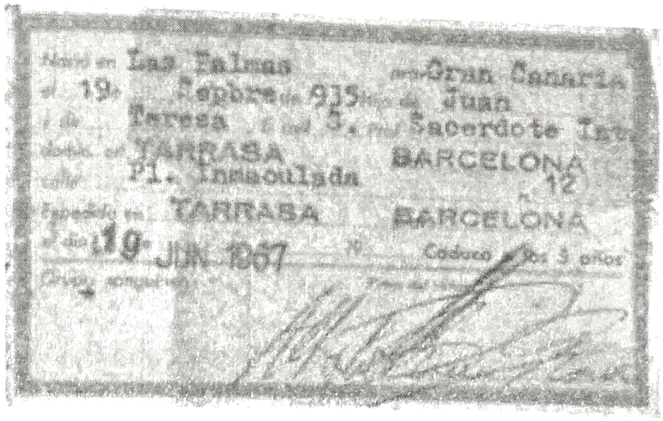
Chick's picture book *fantasy* finds Rivera in 1965 as a Jesuit priest in Guatemala exposing Rome to a crowd of 50,000. We see him arrested by the Roman Catholic authorities and eventually taken to Barcelona, Spain, to a Roman Catholic asylum for priests who have gone insane. In *fact* Rivera was in Hoboken, New Jersey, El Paso, Texas and Mexico. In Hoboken he worked for the Christian Reformed Church, he had a wife Lydia, and they had a child Juan of a few months old. His supervisor* tells us his work and behaviour were unsatisfactory. He was dismissed from the church. He left debts unpaid. Rivera and Lydia travelled via El Paso into Mexico. A Christian minister's* report from there shows how Rivera was still exploiting people.

Catholic or Protestant in 1967?

Another *fantasy* is of Rivera getting converted to Christ and miraculously escaping from an iron lung in the insane asylum. The *fact* is that Rivera was working as the Director of a Protestant School* in the same Spanish city. He was soon dismissed, whereupon he went to the nearby Roman Catholic parish* of San Lorenzo complaining of persecution by the Protestants. He swindled the Protestants, and now he was swindling Catholics in a poor part of the city. Rivera also swindled a Roman Catholic school.* Apart from the financial fraud, now living in a Catholic monastery, he also equipped himself with false Roman Catholic papers and attire. In his new robes he returned on a money-raising visit to his native Canary Islands, telling the local newspaper* he had been ordained as a Roman Catholic priest in Costa Rica. Neither converted to Protestantism nor converted to Roman Catholicism, 1967 was in *fact* another year of financial swindles. Such are the facts. Alberto's true history has repeated itself. The extraordinary *facts* of 1967 are as remarkable as the *fantasy* of the picture books.

Twisting the Facts

Rivera's *fantasy* of a Vatican plot against him extends to his visit to a dentist. Evidencing his normal paranoia, two pages of pictures and detail in *"Double-Cross"* tell how the dentist "purposely" left him open to infection and death. The *fact* is that the dental procedures Rivera describes are normal dental practice. The inside-front cover in all the picture books displays Rivera's printed credentials and we are invited to the wrong conclusions just like the visit to the dentist. His Spanish I.D. card describes Rivera as a priest, and he is wearing a Roman collar. The address is that of the Roman Catholic church of San Lorenzo, Barcelona, after his dismissal by the Protestant church. Rivera's priesthood is a *fantasy*. The *fact* is there was no formality to stop anyone describing himself as a priest, or as anything else, on an I.D. card in 1967. Yet another *fantasy* pictured on the inside-cover is of Rivera supposedly as Director of the Parish School in San Lorenzo. The *fact* is there was no Parish School in San Lorenzo.



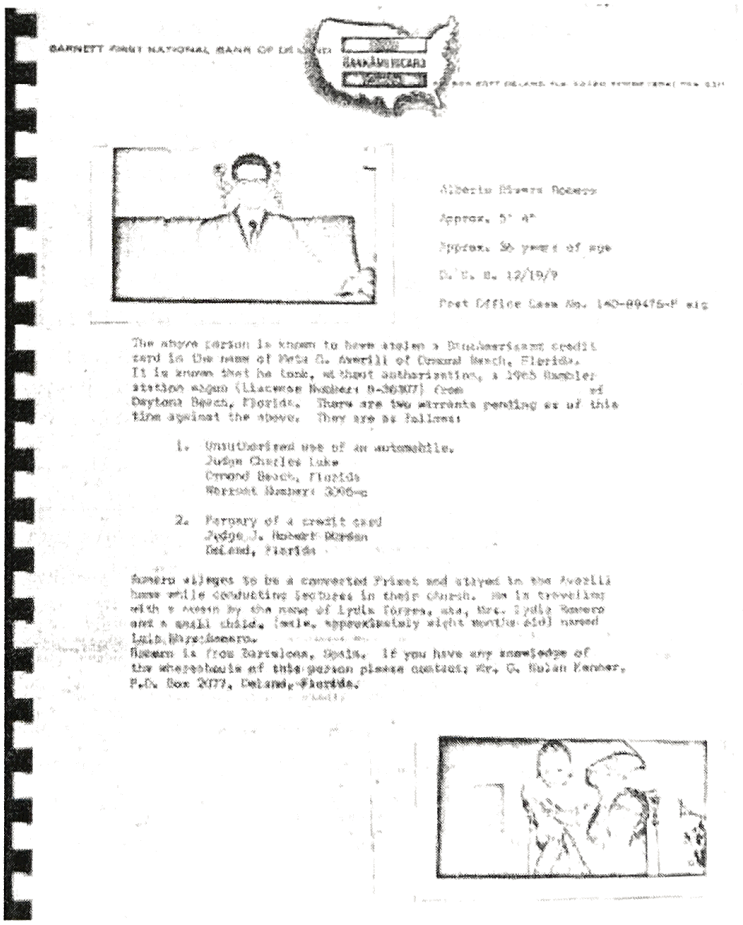
A normal Spanish I.D. card. Rivera was a national of Spain

Alberto's Sister in London

In the same year, 1967, Rivera flies to London. He discovers his sister, Maria, in a convent there. His *fantasy* is that her dress was blood-soaked, dried, and stiff from bleeding ulcers on her back after flagellation. After the arrival of the Metropolitan Police, he carries his sister away to safety. Where is Maria today? In 1991 Rivera hadn't seen his family for many years and we read in *"Double-Cross"*: "Dr Rivera believes she is either dead or suffering in another convent." A new picture book, published in Korea in 1990, tells us that Maria was martyred by Roman Catholics. Such is the *fantasy*. Deluded members of Rivera's church wept real tears with him upon hearing his story of her death. Such is the tragedy. Yet the *fact* is that in 1991 Maria is alive.

Rivera – Wanted!

By 1968, supposedly now converted, Rivera is in Tennessee, no longer pretending as a Roman Catholic priest, but cheating a Protestant denomination, and many good people who helped him. Soon he is swindling people in Florida and we find him wanted by police there for theft of a credit card and an automobile from church people. Back with Lydia again, and with another infant Luis Marx, a few months old, we soon lose trace of Luis Marx. With car and credit card, Rivera and Lydia leave for Washington State where Rivera preaches at Revival meetings. The pastors in Seattle, Washington, got word from Florida that they had a fraud amongst them. A bank official from the Barnett Bank in DeLand, Florida,* and a Lieutenant of DeLand Police Department,* were after him, but Rivera smartly escaped them all.


BARNETT FIRST NATIONAL BANK OF DELAND

Alberto Rivera Romero

Approx. 5' 4"

Approx. 36 years of age

D.O.B. 12/19/9

Post Office Case No. 140-00476-F etc

The above person is known to have stolen a BankAmericard credit card in the name of Pete G. Averill of Ormond Beach, Florida. It is known that he took, without authorization, a 1965 Rambler station wagon (License Number: N-36307) from of Daytona Beach, Florida. There are two warrants pending as of this time against the above. They are as follows:

1. Unauthorized use of an automobile.
   Judge Charles Luke
   Ormond Beach, Florida
   Warrant Number: 2006-c

2. Forgery of a credit card
   Judge J. Robert Dorsen
   DeLand, Florida

Romero alleges to be a converted Priest and stayed in the Averill home while conducting lectures in their church. He is traveling with a woman by the name of Lydia Forrer, aka, Mrs. Lydia Romero and a small child, (male, approximately eight months old) named Luis Marx-Romero.

Romero is from Barcelona, Spain. If you have any knowledge of the whereabouts of this person please contact: Mr. G. Dulan Kenner, P.O. Box 2077, DeLand, Florida.

Alberto Rivera is *WANTED!*

Names, Titles and Degrees

Rivera uses the style of a bishop. It is probably a *fantasy* that he was ever a bishop in the Old Roman Catholic Church as the *Alberto* book tells us. The *fact* is there is a letter from the Archbishop and

Metropolitan* which states that Rivera most certainly has never been ordained into the Old Roman Catholic Church. As to academic matters, the *fact* is that Rivera is a man of poor education. Rivera's *fantasy* is that he holds doctorates in Philosophy, Theology, Sociology, History and Bible. Rivera's Birth Certificate identifies his only names as Alberto Rivera Romero. That is the *fact*. Rivera's *fantasy* adds a new name, Magno. In English it is translated as magnificent. His printed card shows a coat of arms, a Latin inscription, and his name: "Alberto Magno R. Rivera, DT, DD, ND, NRH – Bishop."

Two Different False Stories

Rivera produced an account of his life on a Spanish phonograph record, *"From Rome to Christ."* He deceives Hispanics across the American continent with it. The record is different from the picture book testimonies, yet both are false. Eventually the six 32-page picture books Jack Chick* produced from 1979 to 1988 were to abound with Rivera's fables. His so-called comic books are anything but comic. Powerfully persuasive, the *Alberto* series, like the picture books based upon John Todd before Rivera, and the stories from Rebecca Brown and Elaine since, contains much *fantasy*. Rivera is not who he says he is, yet sales and distribution are on a vast scale and millions of readers, attracted by the powerful graphic sensationalism, neither versed in history nor the detailed workings of Roman Catholicism, come to believe Rivera's fiction and falsehoods.

Chick Promotes New History

By 1988, because of the Chick picture books, Rivera is widely known in Christian circles throughout the world. His passports to ever more speaking engagements have been the Chick books. The later ones have progressively given less space to Rivera's personal story and more to the new history Rivera supposedly learned when given access as a Jesuit Priest to the secret archives of the Vatican. It seems likely that among all the publications against Roman Catholicism, nothing has ever had a circulation as large as these picture books. They oppose Rome with startling examples of false history. We are told Roman Catholics were responsible for founding Islam. Such dangerous deceptions are also promoted through 22-page picture tracts. Chick Publications, with a range which includes some good material, are almost certainly the largest Christian tract publishers in the world, claiming a production of 100,000 per day. One of their latest, *"The Deceived,"* relates how Vatican spies were on the lookout for a potential leader of the new religion. The fantasy is that at long last they found a brilliant youth named Mohammed. The source of it all is Alberto Rivera, a man identified with forty years of fraud.

1991 – The Tightening of the Net

This year sees a turning of the tide against Rivera. It is time for him to be stopped. The research into Rivera's life and background is substantially completed. There is material enough for several books and several films. On 21st August 1991, Carlos Orea*, a former elder of Rivera's church, interviewed outside Los Angeles Municipal Court, was heard by millions on the main KABC-TV News: "I discover he's an impostor. He's a liar. He's in the church because – money." Ismael Guerrero*, a medical doctor and former elder who served Rivera for three years, gave evidence at Rivera's trial, and was also heard by the TV viewers. He said Rivera was "...getting a lot of Christians that are in a vulnerable state. And he will draw money from you because you think you're helping this super cause." Carlos Orea and Donald Blanton*, another former member, were the plaintiffs. The photographs were taken when Rivera conducted Donald Blanton's wedding. Ismael Guerrero was best man. Three years later the men were photographed outside the court room at Rivera's trial. The question before the court was "money" – a key in the Alberto Rivera story. The judge found against Rivera. He said Rivera hides behind high-sounding titles to take money from people who believe in his cause.

Rivera's *Members* – 1988; L to R: Mrs Nury Rivera (Rivera's wife); a guest; Grace (bride); Donald Blanton; Albertito (Rivera's son); Mrs Bertha Guerrero; Ismael Guerrero, MD; Alberto Rivera.

Rivera's *Plaintiffs* – 1991; L to R: Ismael Guerrero, MD; Donald Blanton; Carlos Orea; Dr Dino Badaracco (C.E.L.E.M. – Latin American Ministers' Committee On Ethics)

Conclusion

In a meeting with the Director of KABC-TV News after the programme, Roy Livesey was told: "There is more than one story here." How right the Director is. Rivera promotes the fantasies of his past exploits as a Jesuit, yet the facts of his personal frauds, the mystery of his wife and children, the truth of the past forty years, is just as fantastic. Rivera's personal financial deceptions continue unabated. The false history is in the long term even more sinister and dangerous.

As the TV News chief observed, there are several different stories in the Rivera saga. The research is done. Documentation is in hand. The script is complete. More than enough is available for a film and for a large book.

Where other attempts to stop Rivera have failed, the Church can pray that this time there may be success. There is biblical warrant for Christians to act (Ephesians 5:11; 2 Corinthians 4:1-2; Titus 1:10-11). Books and films are not the only way to stop Rivera. Some have observed that except he be locked up, there is no way at all to stop him. However, his extraordinary influence could be substantially curtailed by both a film and a book. Indeed it is necessary to think in these terms if adequate warning is to be sounded – a warning to reach the millions who have been, and will be, misled.

However, we can thank God for the exposés of Rivera which have appeared in print this far, and these include the following: (1) *Cornerstone Magazine* – 1981 (Chicago, Ill.) – the original work by Gary Metz; (2) *Christianity Today* 13 March 1981, pp 50-53, "Jack Chick's Anti-Catholic *Alberto* Comic Book is Exposed as a Fraud," by Gary Metz; (3) *The Alberto Story* by Gary Metz (1981); (4) *Forward* (The News and Research Periodical of the Christian Research Institute – Volume Four; Number Two) "Alberto – The Truth About His Story" by Brian Onken (1983); (5) *Journal of Pastoral Practice* (Ed: Jay E. Adams), Special Report by Kurt Goedelman: "The Alberto Phenomenon", Vol 5, No 2, 1981, pp 83-88; (6) *Take a Closer Look* (Concerned Christians Growth Ministries, Inc – Western Australia – Jan, Feb, March, April 1988).

We are also grateful to those who have related their experiences to the research team. Where an asterisk (*) is shown, names, addresses and telephone numbers are available. However these will be given to enquirers only where appropriate.

The titles of the Chick *Alberto* picture books, all authored by JTC (Jack Chick), are: *"Alberto"* (1979); *"Double-Cross"* (1981); *"The Godfathers"* (1982); *"The Force"* (1983); *"The Four Horsemen"* (1985); *"The Prophet"* (1988). All are available from Chick Publications, P.O. Box 662, Chino, CA 91708-0662. Other different *Alberto* picture book titles, not in the English language, are published overseas. Some Chick titles are also available in foreign languages.

Originally published in November 1991; republished in this article format April 2014

Roy Livesey has authored many books exposing the New Age Movement and other deceptions. This article first appeared in the *New Age Bulletin,* Vol III, No 4, November 1991, published by Roy and Rae Livesey, Kidderminster, England. The bulletin is no longer published. Permission was given for it to be freely copied and quoted.

The only editing that has been done to this article has been the addition of the photo on the front page, and the removal of some illustrations reproduced from the Chick comic books, which in turn necessitated a very slight change to the wording relating to one of these. For these illustrations the reader is referred to the comics themselves.

Note: although we have retained the asterisks used by Roy Livesey to indicate that he had names, addresses and phone numbers available for documentation, the article was written many years ago and we do not have access to these; however, Bible Based Ministries does have available for purchase a documentation package, compiled by Donald R. Blanton, which contains firsthand accounts of people who worked with Rivera, copies of court records showing he made fraudulent loans and swindled money, etc.

Bible Based Ministries

info@biblebasedministries.co.uk
www.biblebasedministries.co.uk

This article may be copied for free distribution if it is copied in full

WORLDWIDE CONTACT FOR BIBLE BASED MINISTRIES:

Contending for the Faith Ministries

42055 Crestland Drive
Lancaster, CA 93536
United States of America
BBMOrders@aol.com